

of childhood were gliding swiftly away, never to return. Charles had now arrived at the age of sixteen years. In personal appearance he had amply fulfilled the promise of his boyhood, and no one could look upon the noble youth without admiration. He was tall for his years, and, accustomed to athletic sports, his figure displayed a careless grace and ease in every motion, while the glow of health shone rich and warm through the dark complexion. His features were regular, though rather strongly defined, and the expression of pride and determination which the haughty curve of the upper lip bespoke, which glanced from the eye and pervaded even the expressive forehead, lent to his face a character beyond his years. Impatient of control, proud and wayward in his disposition, Charles O'Donnel possessed that spirit which may be influenced by affection, but which spurns a more harsh control. Such were the prominent faults in a character which displayed many redeeming qualities, conspicuous amongst which was a frank, open disposition, which scorned deceit, a lavish generosity towards those whom he could assist, and an utter absence of those selfish motives which too frequently mar a character. Captain Fitzgerald loved the boy the more dearly for his high spirit and noble bearing, and often as he looked upon him, when, some trivial occurrence having irritated him, his eagle eye flashed with indignation, and his slender form was drawn up to its full height, he thought, with the spirit of the soldier which yet lingered in his bosom, how nobly the boy would distinguish himself by his daring in the service of his country.

Mrs. Fitzgerald, however, regarded with other feelings and with more anxiety, those strong traits in the character of Charles, and her influence had been exerted, and not in vain, to soften them. She contemplated with pain how unquiet his future life might be, if subjected to the influence of such stormy passions, which, if not curbed, would become yet more violent in the man than in the boy, and might prove the ruin of his own happiness as well as of that of others.

There was one being at Ardmore, however, whose power over the wayward boy was unbounded. When agitated by the most violent passion and deaf to admonition, if Constance but placed her small hand upon his arm, and looked up into his face with her earnest, imploring eyes, the dark cloud would vanish from his brow, the angry features would relax, and Charles would become himself again. It was astonishing how his impetuous nature would in a moment subject itself to her gentle control. Notwithstanding his many faults, there was not a cottage for miles

around Ardmore in which the name of Charles O'Donnel was not pronounced with the deepest gratitude and love. Few could be found on whom he had not conferred a benefit, who had not received some proof of his generosity. Such were the faults and virtues of Charles O'Donnel at the age of sixteen years.

But Time, which had converted the laughing boy into the handsome youth, had wrought a change also upon the personal appearance of Captain Fitzgerald. The snows of age were already shining upon his head, and although he still retained his erect, military carriage, his figure was much thinner and his step less elastic than of old. But Constance, his wife, the partner of his joys and sorrows! Alas! she is again seated on the lawn beside the smooth, placid lake where we last beheld her, but how changed! Though it is a sultry summer's evening, and the sun has not yet sunk to rest behind the distant hills, her shadowy form is enveloped in a heavy Indian shawl, which Charles with the fondest care has wrapped around her. She reclines upon the rustic seat, her face pale, except where the bright hectic tinged her sunken cheek, and with a hand almost too transparent to belong to earth, resting upon the head of her child, who knelt on the grass at her side.

"Constance, my love," said Fitzgerald, "all our arrangements are completed, and to-morrow we leave for your native land, upon which you desire so much to look again."

"Yes, Edward," she replied; "I would gladly see once more the bright spot where the days of my childhood were spent, and wander again by the stream, upon whose banks we first met. I think that if I could only breathe the mild air of my own land, and look upon her bright, unclouded skies, that health and strength would revive within me—that weakness and lassitude would forsake this weary frame, as I wander again through her orange groves, and inhale the odour-laden breeze which bears health and life on its wings."

"Yes, dear mother," said Constance, "you will no longer feel ill and sad when you are in Italy, that beautiful country that Charles and I have always longed so ardently to behold. I will take my guitar with me, and as you and my father rest, fatigued with wandering among its lovely scenery, I will seat myself beside you and sing the songs of your own land which you have taught me, while Charles will take sketches of every hill and valley, that we may bring back with us to Ardmore when we return."

The mother smiled, as she listened to the con-